

Day 3

From Comprehensive to Selected Interventions: How Every School Can Increase Connectedness

“The important message for people to hear is that paying attention to the emotional climate of schools, paying attention to the relationships of adults with each other and kids at school, [and] paying attention to the policies and rules that govern school and how justice is dispensed at school and how adults relate to the young people at school makes a vast difference. When it is done well, kids flourish. When it is done poorly, very little else matters.”



- Robert Blum, professor and chair, Department of Population and Family Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

The work that you are already doing as a coordinator likely helps increase students' connectedness to your school. Programs, from anti-bullying and anti-truancy to character education, mentoring, service-learning, and social and emotional learning, all can help build connectedness in schools. Today we look at ways that you can assess and enhance student, staff, and parent engagement in schools.



Four Things Coordinators Can Do to Build Connectedness


According to Eric Schaps, president of the Developmental Studies Center, which created the Caring School Community project, coordinators can do four things to help build connectedness in their schools:


- Systematically cultivate positive relationships, including peer relationships, faculty and student relationships, relationships among school staff, and parent and school relationships. Find opportunities for students to serve as mentors to younger students.
- Help provide opportunities for students to collaborate and cooperate so that they learn how to work together.
- Give students a voice and a choice, such as in setting up norms and goals for their classes.

- Help students see and think about values and goals that matter in a democratic society.


“I would say to coordinators to look at these four dimensions, assess what is strong and weak in the way the school currently functions, and try to combine prevention money with other money,” Schaps says. “A lot of prevention coordinators are feeling marginalized by all the focus on academic achievement. There's no room for them in school improvement efforts. But if you promote connectedness, you will over the long term produce academic results.”


Connectedness is nested within and builds off a culture of a school that nourishes connection. There are four interconnected parts:

 **Caring attachment.** This can include norms that focus on connection, classroom and school strategies that build connection, and structures that support a capacity to care. Several programs, such as the Caring School Community project, actively work to create these “caring communities.” Maurice Elias, a psychology professor at Rutgers University who has worked in this field for decades, notes that “caring relationships are the basis of all learning.” Some of this work is direct, such as teachers making sure that all students have at least one caring adult in their lives at school. Some is indirect, such as school staff modeling caring behavior with children and one another.

 **Social and emotional learning.** To feel connected, students need to be in caring schools and they need to learn a set of social and emotional competencies so that they can connect with others. This is also known as social and emotional learning (SEL). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, high-quality SEL programming has two primary features: (1) creating schools and classrooms that are safe, caring, well-managed, and participatory, and (2) teaching a core set of social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making). Through both approaches, students should develop a greater attachment to school. An example of SEL might be conflict resolution, where students learn how to work through conflicts with their peers and teachers in a constructive way. Under the best circumstances, teachers and other staff teach SEL skills throughout the day, rather than in a distinct program.


Click [here](#) for examples of effective SEL programs


 **Positive behavior supports.** To build connectedness, schools need to support caring connections between and among students and adults. Positive behavior supports can mean creating schools where students and staff feel safe. It can also mean creating a school-wide environment where everyone agrees to and follows the same rules of conduct. In environments that are chaotic and where adults are punitive, students do not feel connected. Conversely, in an environment where people are positively reinforcing one another, students are more likely to feel connected and behave appropriately.


 **Learning approaches that foster connection.** This can include enthusiastic teaching that engages students through work that interests them. Students who are academically engaged are more likely to feel connected to school. These learning approaches can include service-learning, cooperative learning, and noncompetitive games.

With this framework in mind, we are going to take a look at how schools can build connectedness, from a school-wide universal approach to early interventions and intensive interventions that are aimed at children who are having difficulty feeling connected.



 **Universal interventions.** Universal interventions are school or classroom practices that are aimed at or target all students. These interventions strive to promote connectedness among all students and staff at schools. About 80 to 90 percent of all students should respond well to a well-implemented universal intervention.

 **Early interventions.** These interventions are aimed at students who need greater levels of support. The decision to provide early intervention can either be based on early warning signs or because the student is a member of a group of students who are likely to be at risk for academic or behavioral problems. In the case of connectedness, an early intervention might be targeted to the new students entering school.

 **Intensive interventions.** These interventions provide coordinated and comprehensive support to students with intense levels of need. An intervention for connectedness might target students who are having particular difficulty making friends and are acting out in class.



Universal Interventions

Programs like the Caring School Community project, the Seattle Social Development Project, and First Things First, which is aimed at high schools, are examples of universal interventions that seek to build connectedness among all students. They seek to affect the entire school culture and climate. These approaches do not necessarily depend on bringing in a new program.

Click [here](#) for information on First Things First

When Kristen Pelster became the assistant principal at Ridgewood Middle School, she was assuming some of the leadership of a school with rampant discipline problems, low morale, and poor test scores. She and her colleague, Principal Tim Crutchley, began a process of universal interventions to build connectedness in the school.



School climate is an important factor in promoting school connectedness. If students and staff do not feel comfortable at school, it is going to be difficult for them to feel connected to it. At Ridgewood, the physical climate was one of the first things that needed attention. Graffiti was written all over the buildings, the bathrooms were in disrepair, and the courtyard was full of weeds. Even the benches in the courtyard were rotted out. One of the first tasks the school took on was to spruce up the physical surroundings.

“The kids didn't want to come to the building,” Pelster says. “Our first goal was that the kids would not feel embarrassed about coming here their first day of school.”

School staff, parents, and students spent the summer in a “massive undertaking” of cleaning up the school. They repainted the bathrooms, pulled weeds, and planted flowers. As the physical space started to improve, staff looked at other ways to enhance the school climate. The dress code was essentially nonexistent, with girls often wearing cropped T-shirts to school. During the summer, the staff created a dress code policy and sent it home to all students and parents. The policy made it clear that clothes that had been acceptable before could no longer be worn at school.

Click [here](#) for a summary of universal interventions

Caring Relationships with Teachers

At Ridgewood, Pelster and her colleagues implemented a comprehensive program built around the school's character education program, called *CHARACTERplus*, which seeks to enable students and adults in school to understand, care about, and act on ethical values, such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for oneself and others.



On Day 1, we looked at the steps that Ridgewood school staff took to ease the transition of new middle school students. Once the students arrived in seventh grade, the school staff took other steps to help them feel connected. The students were divided into two teams - the Voyagers and the Stingrays. All of the teachers taught each team, and had the same planning and conference periods so that they could confer about any student that was struggling and bring the student into the meeting if necessary. Pelster says that having the same teachers know a student helps foster connections and helps avoid students slipping through the cracks, as is often possible in middle school when a child is changing classes seven times a day.

Click [here](#) for more information on Character Education

The school also started an advisory period that meets every day for a half-hour. The period focuses solely on building personal relationships with students and helping them feel like they belong to the school community. One day a week, they do team-building exercises, which the students develop. Students in advisory classes also take responsibility for the physical upkeep of the school. They take turns getting black marks off the floor, picking up trash, and dusting lockers, among other things. The school also has a class called Character Council, which is composed of 60 students, 2 from every advisory class. The students develop character education lessons on such topics as sexual harassment and bullying.

"To me, children are not going to learn unless they feel like they are cared about and belong to the culture of the school," Pelster says. "That is the foundation of character education - kids feeling [like] they are cared for and they are respected by teachers and students."

High Expectations

Pelster and the teachers keep students on track with their school work with a program called "Zeros Aren't Permitted." That means that failure is not permitted at the school. If students come to class without their homework completed, the teachers fill out a form, and the students are sent to designated tables during lunch. Then, instead of having lunch with their friends, the students sit with Pelster and complete their homework. If they do not finish then, Pelster calls their parents and asks if the students can stay after school to finish their assignments.

Student-Led Presentations

Another tenet of connectedness is that students need to develop a sense of competence. Ridgewood stresses cooperative learning, where students participate in group projects and have some say in deciding what to do. Ridgewood also holds student-led conferences, rather than parent-teacher conferences. At the conferences, students assemble a portfolio of their work for each quarter and do a self-assessment of their work, including areas where they need to improve. They review their progress with their parents and teacher at the conferences.



"Usually, parent-teacher conferences turn into `Johnny doesn't behave,'" Pelster says. "Now all the focus is back on the students and their work. It's a huge success. The parents love it. The kids love it."

The attendance rate by parents for these conferences has increased dramatically - from 44 percent in 2000 to around 90 percent in 2005, Pelster says.

The school has seen other successes as well. Attendance increased from 90 percent in 2000 to

95 percent in 2005. According to school officials, a focus on connection has helped turn outcomes around. Discipline referrals have decreased by 60 percent. Test scores have gone up: In 2000, the test score for math was 164; in 2005, it was 187 (the state average is 167). In 2000, the reading scores were 155 - almost 40 points below the state average. In 2005, the scores had improved to 232.

Parent Support: Lessons Learned

Looking back, Pelster says that if she had to do this process over, she would have tried to involve the parents more right from the start. She points out that it is a struggle to get parents involved at the middle school level, in part because their children are embarrassed at seeing them at school functions. Pelster also says that many of the parents are single, or are both working, which makes it hard for them to find time to be involved in the school. But she says that if they had brought parents in at the planning stages, it might have been easier to get them involved later.

"If I could think of an initiative that I would put time and energy into, it would be parent involvement," she says. "Since it's hard to get parents here at school, we've talked about going to the neighborhoods where we hardly see parents [at school]. A lot don't have telephones. We could have a neighborhood ice cream social and have literature about parenting and our school. We could get them involved in their child's education just by visiting with the parents."

Teacher Training and Support



Cossitt Elementary School in La Grange, Illinois is a long-time partner in the Caring School Community (CSC) project, which seeks to create caring communities for students, school staff, and families. The school has 600 students and is located in a suburb west of Chicago.

Principal Mary Tavegia says that the town encompasses a range of socioeconomic levels - from students who receive free lunch to those who live in million-dollar homes. The school began participating in CSC in 1996 as a pilot program in the district. The decision to do so

came out of a strategic planning process in the school district. As staff examined the school

environment, they found that students did not always feel connected to the school and that relationships with teachers and peers were not as strong as the staff would have liked. The staff chose CSC because it was so connected to the curriculum. Teachers could build it into everything they did. At the suggestion of the CSC developers, school staff phased in the work over a period of three years. The idea was to gradually build teacher understanding and proficiency with the project elements, according to an evaluation of the project.

One of the hallmarks of this approach is its intensive staff training. There were about 10 days devoted to staff development each year in the first two years of the program - and that was a scaled-back training.

"It took a lot of training to help teachers understand the importance of relationships and children feeling connected to school, along with an understanding of how they can restructure their classrooms and thinking to help kids feel more connected," Tavegia says. "It's what you can do to build it in throughout the day so it's not just a program of sitting and talking to the kids once a week. Do instructors have more collaborative ways of learning for kids? There is a lot of thinking about academic autonomy and helping the kids have a voice in the classroom. A lot of it was teachers learning to give up control to kids. It's a huge shift in thinking. You are empowering people to do that and give them strategies."

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Cross-age buddies is one of the key elements of the CSC project. Older kids are paired with kids who are at least two years younger. "These partnerships allow older students to experience themselves as caring, competent and valued, while younger students see themselves as worthy of special attention and kindness," according to an evaluation of the Cossitt program by Mary Utne O'Brien and James R. Murray. "These activities are designed to support academic goals for students, rather than take time away from them. Teachers have found that, as a result of this program, they see more spontaneous helping behavior and less teasing among students, which contributes to a school-wide atmosphere of trust."



For a year, the buddies get together once a week to do activities, such as tutoring or playing games that help them learn. The cross-age buddies are a key way that children learn autonomy and how to take responsibility for their learning, Tavegia says. With the older students taking the lead, the buddies plan their activities. Beforehand, teachers will talk with the older students about what they need to do to make the activity go as planned. They brainstorm ideas to deal with the possibility that the younger child will not want to do the activity. Afterward, the buddies get a chance to debrief about what worked and what did not so they can learn for the future.

"There's a huge payoff," Tavegia says. "I've had people come in and say 'I didn't know that you paired up buddies on the playground.' We didn't. But the buddies will naturally do that."

Click [here](#) for Guidelines for Effective SEL Programming

Another payoff for the buddy system is that teachers get paired up who would not normally work together. Each year, teachers work with a different teacher for another grade. The teachers work together to plan activities and find links between their classes' curricula. They also model journal writing exercises to the students by writing journal entries to each other. That intensive collaboration promotes a sense of connectedness between the teachers, Tavegia said. The

students also get to know teachers from other grade levels which develops yet another level of connectedness.

"It's another way to build staff connections," Tavegia says. "You can pair a person who is enthusiastic about this with someone who is not enthusiastic, and change them."



Early Intervention

Some students may have more difficulty feeling connected because they are new to the school or are coming from difficult home situations. Those students will need more attention than the universal interventions can provide. Cossitt Elementary serves children from a domestic violence shelter, where children and their families can stay up to 12 weeks, and children from the Masonic Children's Home, who are there because their parents cannot care for them.

"Those are the kids we really work on," said Tavegia says. "It's hard for them. They don't feel as bonded to the school. They are coming into a very different environment. They are used to solving problems with their fist in much more disruptive settings."

Tavegia makes a point of meeting every new student and welcoming them, along with their parents if possible. According to Tavegia, school staff and students have tried the following ways of welcoming these students into school:

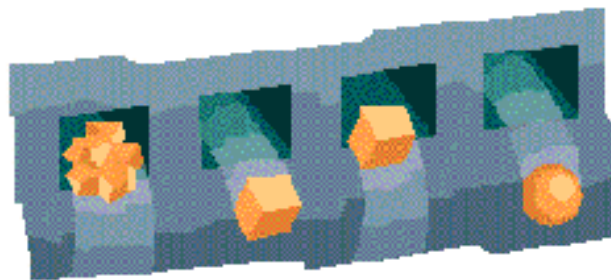


- ❖ Prior to the entry of a new student, classes hold a meeting to plan how to welcome and nurture the new child who is joining them.
- ❖ Each new student is assigned a buddy who gives them a tour, has lunch with them, and sits next to them in class to help get acclimated.

❖ The school social worker has “new student luncheons” every month, which are organized separately for younger and older students. All children who are new to the school attend the luncheon their first month there and then are welcome to join every month afterward. Some children are regular attendees, and others come only once or twice, but there is usually a group of students who gather. At these luncheons, the children have the chance to talk about any issues or concerns they have, and they may play a game that is open-ended and relates to friendship and school skills.

❖ The social worker maintains a connection with the parents of children who are staying at the domestic violence shelter to assist with any concerns they may have.

Tavegia and her SEL team are working on other ways to help these new students learn about the skills the other students are developing, such as problem solving and relating to friends, and learning the language they use around social skills to help the new students feel comfortable with the class meeting procedures. The staff may also recommend that all students wear name tags for several days after a new student arrives, and they may write a guide for the buddies of new students.



At Bartlett High School in Anchorage, Alaska, student members of Planning Academic and Career Excellence (PACE) work with new students to help their transition to the high school. PACE student teachers teach a one-quarter class that introduces new students to the high school and Anchorage, Alaska. The members also have lunch with the students, give them tours, and walk them to classes.

According to advisor Rebecca Vano, the new students are not the only ones who benefit from the program; PACE members as well often flourish with their responsibilities to the new students.

"When I look at kids and think what influence they could wield if they were just a little more outgoing, a little more assertive about things . . . to see that happen is really rewarding and they're much happier," she says in Helping Kids Succeed - Anchorage School District Style. "They're empowered."



Intensive Interventions

Some students will still have a hard time feeling connected to school. Often these are students who are struggling academically and have behavior problems. Administrators like Tavegia say that their teachers work to encourage collaborative learning opportunities that will help these students feel comfortable by matching them with partners who are skilled socially and supportive of students in need. Staff also find jobs for students to do to give them a sense of value and purpose in the school as well as positive feedback. These jobs are tailored to the student and can include (1) helping the custodian bring paper up from the storage room, (2) emptying the lunch money from the envelopes, (3) shredding old documents, and (4) collecting recycling.

"The students become known around the school and as people call them by name, it does make help them feel more comfortable and, we hope, connected," Tavegia says.

At Ridgewood Middle School, when a student is struggling and does not seem connected to the school, the school takes a series of steps:

- ❖ First, have the student meet with a team of teachers. The teachers ask the student and ask what it would take to feel like he or she belonged to the school. Teachers also ask about school activities and then try to find something for the student to be involved with that would be meaningful for that student.
- ❖ If that is unsuccessful, the school counselor will talk to the student alone and ask who the student's favorite teacher is. The counselor will then sit down with that teacher, tell the teacher that this student likes him or her and ask that teacher to connect with the student every day - to say hi, check in, and find the student during conference time.
- ❖ If the student is still struggling, Kristen Pelster, the assistant principal, steps in. During an elective period, the student will spend time with Pelster in her office. Much of the time is spent developing a relationship with the student. Pelster helps the students with their homework and gives them jobs to do around the office. Even small things make a difference. The school cook always brings around cookies for the staff. Whenever Pelster has a student, she gives the student her cookie.

"If a student can build a relationship with an adult in the school building, it seems to make all the difference," Pelster says. "I've done this with many kids and . . . I've always had a complete turnaround. These seem to be kids with bad home lives who feel like nobody cares about them. They don't feel special, and they are struggling with grades and behavior. It's really relationship building. It's usually kids who don't have any type of relationships with an adult, and that includes parents."

Does your school have a plan for connecting students who are disconnected?

Yes

No

Current Results

Some students will still need a more comprehensive approach to help them feel and stay connected to school. For more information on these approaches, look at the coordinator's online events on bullying, truancy, and youth gangs. Each event provides tools and programs for getting students in serious trouble reconnected to school.

Click here for access to these other online events:

Exploring the Nature and Prevention of Bullying

<http://www.k12coordinator.org/onlinece/onlineevents/bullying>

Truancy: A Serious Problem for Students, Schools, and Society

<http://www.k12coordinator.org/onlinece/onlineevents/truancy>

Youth Gangs: Going Beyond the Myths to Address a Critical Problem

http://www.k12coordinator.org/onlinece/onlineevents/gangs_event



Today we looked at approaches that all schools can take to build connectedness from universal to early intervention and intensive intervention. As seen in the schools profiled, with patience and commitment, it is possible to turn around schools where there seemed to be little connectedness. Tomorrow we will look at the role of student leadership. We will examine the types of student involvement that are most meaningful and look at examples of meaningful roles for students.



Click [here](#) to print a PDF of today's materials.



Discussion Questions

Please think about the questions below and share your responses, comments, and/or any questions about today's material in the [Discussion Area](#) .

- ◆ Think about your existing efforts in prevention. How can they be used to increase connectedness? Are there ways that they need to be enhanced?
- ◆ Look at the four parts of connectedness: (1) caring attachment, (2) social and emotional learning, (3) positive behavior supports, and (4) learning approaches that foster connection. In what specific ways is your school strong in any of these areas? Where does it need improvement? Why?
- ◆ What does your school do to promote a sense of connectedness among students who may have more difficulty becoming engaged in school? If your school is not focused on this, what ideas do you have to help them?

This completes today's work.

Please visit the [Discussion Area](#) to share your responses to the discussion questions!

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Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs

According to *Making the Case for Social and Emotional Learning and Service-Learning*, the following are examples of effective social and emotional learning programs.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). Using a curriculum that teaches several core skills, this program is one of the largest school-based violence prevention programs in the country. The core skills include communicating and listening, cooperating, expressing feelings and dealing with anger, resolving conflicts, appreciating diversity, and countering bias. An evaluation of 5,000 participants in grades 2-6 found significant decreases in hostility and aggression and substantial advances in prosocial behavior. Students' scores in reading and math on standardized tests also increased dramatically.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Curriculum. A comprehensive prevention program for elementary students in kindergarten through 5th grade, PATHS is designed to improve social, emotional, and academic abilities. Regular classroom instructors teach PATHS with initial support from project staff. Detailed lessons, taught throughout the course of each academic year, focus on essential developmental skills in emotional literacy, positive peer relations, and problem solving. Parents are also involved in reinforcing the lessons that children are learning in school. Four studies - two involving regular classroom students and two involving special needs students - have shown an increase in social and emotional competencies, a decrease in aggression and depression, and an improvement in cognitive abilities related to school success.

Check & Connect. Implemented with elementary, middle, and high school students who have attendance problems and are at risk of educational failure, this program utilizes mentors who work with students and parents over an extended period of time. The mentors regularly check on students' educational progress and intervene as appropriate to maintain students' commitment to school and learning. Mentors do not replace established relationships in children's lives but collaborate with other adults in supporting students' educational success. Several studies have shown significantly improved attendance and graduation rates among Check & Connect students.

Source: *Making the Case for Social and Emotional Learning and Service-Learning*, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Education Commission of the States and Laboratory for Student Success.

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Broad Intervention Aims to Build Connectedness

According to Adena M. Klem and James P. Connell, “First Things First (FTF), an education reform initiative for schools and school districts developed by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education, seeks to raise student academic performance to levels required for post-secondary education and high-quality employment.

“The Institute works with partners around three goals: (1) strengthening relationships among students, school staff, and families; (2) improving teaching and learning in every classroom every day; and (3) reallocating budget, staff, and time to achieve goals one and two. To meet these goals, FTF helps create personalized environments by restructuring schools into small learning communities (SLCs) and integrates high-quality, standards-based teaching and learning into the SLCs.

“In addition to small learning communities where small groups of teachers and students stay together for all core courses during the day and for the entire time they are in the school (e.g., all three years of middle school or all four years of high school), FTF uses several other strategies to create personalized environments. SLCs become the place where staff members take collective responsibility for every students' success as well as make key decisions about discipline, staffing, time use, and budgets . . .

“Another strategy for creating a caring environment for students is to provide them and their families with an advisor or advocate in the school. FTF developed the Family Advocate System with the goal of creating a bridge between the SLCs and families. Staff members in the SLCs become advocates for a small number of students and their families, stay with them the entire time they are in school, and do whatever it takes to help those students succeed.”

Source: Klem, A.M., & Connell, J.P. (September, 2004). Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 7(74), 262-273.

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Universal Interventions that Can Help Build Connectedness

- Ask principals to stand outside each day and greet students by name.
- Ask teachers to stand outside their classrooms between classes and greet students.
- Enlist students, teachers, and parents in cleaning up the school and taking responsibility for its physical upkeep.
- Build in professional development to help faculty learn the practical steps in building connectedness, such as classroom management.
- Have principals model respectful behavior toward teachers and other school staff. This can include holding collaborative meetings, asking for their input, being available to talk, and writing handwritten notes to each staff member.
- Give students a voice in classroom management and in classroom work.
- Establish, with student input, a discipline code that is fair. Find ways to keep students with behavior problems in school rather than relying on out-of-school suspensions.
- Provide students with meaningful opportunities to participate in school and community governance. Give them leadership opportunities and chances to teach others about respectful behavior.
- Place students in smaller groups in secondary schools and with the same teachers to build cohesion.
- Establish advisory periods where students can get to know one another and build connections.
- Go to the parents, find out what their needs are, and work to meet them (for example, by offering parenting, ESL, or GED classes). That may mean going out into the community rather than asking parents to come to school.





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A School's Role in Character Education

According to the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools of the U.S. Department of Education, schools play a vital role in character education. Here is what schools can do to facilitate character education.

“In school, character education must be approached comprehensively to include the emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities of a person or group. It must offer multiple opportunities for students to learn about, discuss, and enact positive social behaviors. Student leadership and involvement are essential for character education to become a part of a student's beliefs and actions.

“To successfully implement character education, schools are encouraged to:

-  take a leadership role to bring the staff, parents, and students together to identify and define the elements of character they want to emphasize
-  provide training for staff on how to integrate character education into the life and culture of the school
-  form a vital partnership with parents and the community so that students hear a consistent message about the character traits essential for success in school and life
-  provide opportunities for school leaders, teachers, parents, and community partners to model exemplary character traits and social behaviors"

Source: “Character Education: Our Shared Responsibility,” U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Washington, D.C.

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Guidelines for Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programming

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional, these are guidelines for effective social and emotional learning programming:

- 1) Grounded in theory and research.** It is based on sound theories of child development, incorporating approaches that demonstrate beneficial effects on children's attitudes and behavior through scientific research.
- 2) Teaches children to apply SEL skills and ethical values in daily life.** Through systematic instruction and application of learning to everyday situations, it enhances children's social, emotional and ethical behavior. Children learn to recognize and manage their emotions., appreciate the perspective of others, establish positive goals, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively. They also develop responsible and respectful attitudes and values about self, others, work, health, and citizenship.
- 3) Builds connection to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices.** It uses diverse teaching methods to engage students in creating a classroom atmosphere where caring, responsibility, and a commitment to learning thrive. It nurtures students' sense of emotional security and safety, and it strengthens relationships among students, teachers, other school personnel, and families.
- 4) Provides developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.** It offers developmentally appropriate classroom instruction, including clearly specified learning objectives, for each grade level from preschool through high school. It also emphasizes cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity.
- 5) Helps schools coordinate and unify programs that are often fragmented.** It offers schools a coherent unifying framework to promote the positive social, emotional and academic growth of all students. It coordinates school programs that address positive youth development, problem prevention, health, character, service-learning, and citizenship.
- 6) Enhance school performance by addressing the affective and social dimensions of academic learning.** It teaches students social and emotional competencies that encourage classroom participation, positive interactions with teachers, and good study habits. It introduces engaging teaching and learning methods, such as problem-solving approaches and cooperative learning, that motivate students to learn and to succeed academically.
- 7) Involves families and communities as partners.** It involves school staff, peers, parents, and community members in applying and modeling SEL-related skills and attitudes at school, at home, and in the community.

8) Establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success. It ensures high-quality program implementation by addressing factors that determine the long-term success or failure of school-based programs. These include leadership, active participation on program planning by everyone involved, adequate time and resources and alignment with school, district, and state policies.

9) Provide high-quality staff development and support. It offers well-planned professional development for all school personnel. This includes basic theoretical knowledge, modeling and practice of effective teaching methods, regular coaching, and constructive feedback from colleagues.

10) Incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement. It begins with an assessment of needs to establish a good fit between the school's concerns and SEL programs. It continues gathering data to assess progress, ensure accountability and shape program improvement.

Source: *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs*, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Chicago, IL), 2003.

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